MILWAUKEE SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING
NEWS RELEASE
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MSOE
NEWS SERVICES

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WMSE-FM Radio Reformats Programming;

Establishes 18-Hour Broadcast Day

MILWAUKEE--WMSE-FM (91.7) will reduce programming to an 18-hour day (6 a.m. - midnight), effective January 23. The announcement was made today by Bob Betts, WMSE general manager. The radio station is owned and operated by Milwaukee School of Engineering and is located in one of the college's residence halls.

At the same time, the station will revise its scheduling by shifting its daytime soul music segment to late evening.

"The changes came about after long consideration of our listener's needs and our goals," Betts said. "Because we are located physically in a student residence hall, we must be sensitive to security precautions that will help to create a safe environment on the campus. Curtailing of programming between midnight and 6 a.m. will reduce the number of non-students in the area during those hours.

"At the same time, we will seek to increase the potential listening audience of our soul music by moving it to the 10 p.m. - midnight slot on Monday through Friday. The soul daytime segment will be replaced with alternative music that has inherent continuity with our other daytime programming."

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Increased Public Service Announcements

Betts said the station will begin to announce metropolitan area coming events for the business and education communities. "A substantial portion of our daytime listening audience comes from the business community," he said. "We will be working with professional and other groups to assist their promotional efforts that will benefit the community."

WMSE will continue to feature the Pete Christensen Show during the morning drive-time hours of 6 a.m. - 9 a.m., and will air jazz and fusion from 9 a.m. - noon, Betts said. Saturday and Sunday formats will remain unchanged.

College Broadcasting Dates Back to 1914

The college became involved in broadcasting in 1914 when it established a complete sending and receiving station in the Stroh Building, transmitting under the call letters 9YAD. In September 1922, the college began broadcasting on a wave length of 360 meters over a 100-kilowatt transmitter, station WIAO, one of three then in operation in Wisconsin. This led to the offering of courses in radio technology and engineering. The call letters were changed to WSOE on July 7, 1925 after more powerful equipment was purchased. Charles Lindbergh addressed a Milwaukee audience over WSOE to emphasize the uses of radio and the need for radio beacons in aviation. President Herbert Hoover and Vice President Charles Dawes also spoke over the radio. WSOE was acquired in 1928 by The Wisconsin News, a Hearst Corporation newspaper, and renamed WISN.

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The college began to broadcast again in 1982, using the call letters WMSE, after an MSOE alumnus gave the college $50,000 to obtain additional equipment needed to go on the air round the clock.

College Relations Director J. Bryant VanCronkhite said the college is examining options for increasing student involvement in the station, particularly through the college's technical communications and business degree programs. "We are educating students to communicate effectively in the business world," he said, "and WMSE may provide us with a vehicle to enhance classroom experiences."

Students have taken an active role in radio broadcast activities for 75 years. Following establishment of the original sending and receiving station in 1914, the college set up an amateur short-wave radio station in 1924 licensed as W9SO. The station was operated by students who were members of the Radio Club. W9SO was part of the College Radio Union and was selected as the key station of the western sector of the country for College Radio Union communications. W9SO also was affiliated with the American Radio Relay League, a national organization of amateur stations. With its own club room on the roof of the school building, the Radio Club served as a center of interests of all students taking radio service courses.

W9SO was the first in the country to pick up distress calls from San Juan in 1926 when the hurricane disaster in Puerto Rico wiped out communications with the mainland. It also communicated with Byrd's expedition to the South Pole. The Amateur Radio Club currently operates its station from the Administration Building using the call letters W9HHX.

College students currently serve as engineers and volunteer DJs for more than half of the broadcast day time slots.

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